

Week Ending Friday, May 29, 1998

**Statement on House of  
Representatives Action on  
Agriculture Legislation**

*May 22, 1998*

I am deeply disappointed that today the House did not approve the conference report on the agricultural research bill. This carefully crafted legislation balances a broad range of agricultural and nutrition concerns including: crop insurance, agriculture research, rural development, and food stamps for legal immigrants in need. It provides critical funding to ensure the viability of the crop insurance program as the basis of the farm income safety net; to improve food safety and the competitiveness of our farmers through better research; to restore needed food stamps to children, the elderly, and disabled, and refugees among our legal immigrants; and to improve the quality of life in rural areas.

I am grateful that the House today overwhelmingly defeated a rule that would have stripped the food stamp immigrant provisions from the bill and destroyed the delicate compromise in the conference report. Support across the country for these programs and this bill is wide and deep. Today's vote in the House and the Senate's overwhelming vote of 92-8 in passing the conference report is a reflection of the strong backing by farm groups, universities, church organizations, and advocates for the poor.

The House leadership today let down farmers, let down consumers, and let down the children, elderly, and disabled who need the food assistance contained in this bill. I urge the House of Representatives to complete its work and move expeditiously to pass the conference report without change, upon return from the Memorial Day recess.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

**The President's Radio Address**

*May 23, 1998*

Good morning. This weekend marks the time when we honor the brave men and women who gave their lives to serve our country, and we thank the hundreds of thousands of Americans in uniform who protect and defend us every day all around the world. But this Memorial Day weekend, Americans are also praying for the people who lost their lives and for those who were wounded when a 15-year-old boy with semiautomatic weapons opened fire in Springfield, Oregon, this Thursday.

Like all Americans, I am deeply shocked and saddened by this tragedy, and my thoughts and prayers are with the victims and their families. Like all Americans, I am struggling to make sense of the senseless and to understand what could drive a teenager to commit such a terrible act. And like all Americans, I am profoundly troubled by the startling similarity of this crime to the other tragic incidents that have stunned America in less than a year's time: in Paducah, Kentucky; Jonesboro, Arkansas; Pearl, Mississippi; and Edinboro, Pennsylvania.

We must face up to the fact that these are more than isolated incidents. They are symptoms of a changing culture that desensitizes our children to violence; where most teenagers have seen hundreds or even thousands of murders on television, in movies, and in video games before they graduate from high school; where too many young people seem unable or unwilling to take responsibility for their actions; and where all too often, everyday conflicts are resolved not with words but with weapons, which, even when illegal to possess by children, are all too easy to get.

We cannot afford to ignore these conditions. Whether it's gang members taking their deadly quarrels into our schools, or inexplicable eruptions of violence in otherwise

peaceful communities, when our children's safety is at stake we must take action, and each of us must do our part.

For more than 5 years, we have worked hard here in our administration to give parents and communities the tools they need to protect our children and to make our schools safe, from tighter security to more police to better prevention. To promote discipline and maintain order, we are encouraging and have worked hard to spread curfews, school uniforms, tough truancy policies. We instituted a zero tolerance for guns in schools policy. It is now the law in all our 50 States. And we'll work hard to make it a reality in all our communities to keep deadly weapons out of the hands of our children and out of our schools. And we will continue to demand responsibility from our young people with strong punishments when they break the law.

This year Congress has an opportunity to protect children in our schools and on our streets by passing my juvenile crime bill, which will ban violent juveniles from buying guns for life, and take other important steps. We shouldn't let this chance pass us by.

But protecting our children and preventing youth violence is not a job that Government can, or should, do alone. We must all do more as parents, as teachers, as community leaders, to teach our children the unblinking distinction between right and wrong, to teach them to turn away from violence, to shield them from violent images that warp their perceptions of the consequences of violence.

We must all do more to show our children, by the power of our own example, how to resolve conflicts peacefully. And we must all do more to recognize and look for the early warning signals that deeply troubled young people send before they explode into violence. Surely, more of them can be saved and more tragedies avoided if we work at it in an organized way with sensitivity and firm discipline.

This weekend we grieve with the families of Springfield, Oregon. We may never understand the dark forces that drive young people to commit such terrible crimes, but we must honor the memories of the victims by doing everything we possibly can to prevent such tragedies from occurring in the future and

to build a stronger, safer future for all of our children.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 3:30 p.m. on May 22 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on May 23.

### **Radio Remarks on the Passage of the Northern Ireland Peace Accord Referendum**

*May 23, 1998*

Today we are rejoicing at the news from across the Atlantic. The people of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland have decisively approved the April 10th peace accord. It is the culmination of a springtime of peace, and it must be the beginning of a long season of happiness and prosperity.

I salute the leaders who stood for hope against fear, the future against the past, unity against division. Most of all, I congratulate the Irish people for having the courage and wisdom to vote for a brighter future for their children.

As of today, peace is no longer a dream, it is a reality. You have indeed joined hope to history. All over America, the eyes of Irish-Americans, and indeed all our peace-loving citizens, are smiling. We are very proud of you.

We pledge that we will work with you to build a better future for all of your people and ours.

NOTE: The President's remarks were prerecorded for later broadcast in Ireland. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

### **Statement on the Passage of the Northern Ireland Peace Accord Referendum**

*May 23, 1998*

Today history truly joined with hope in Ireland as the people of Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic cast their ballots decisively in favor of the April 10 peace accord and a new political arrangement for Northern Ireland. I join all Americans in congratulating the people of Northern Ireland and